6: Murphy E-5 (1952-1953)1956
SQ13 Mundurucu SQ13

614 428 that personal possessions were destroyed upon death, garden lands were abandoned after two years of planting and allowed to return to forest, and villages and their houses were abandoned every ten years. Thus land and houses, as [423] such, were 'owned' only while being used, and had but temporary value. The [582] only matrilineal traits manifested by the Mundurucú were a taboo on marriage [586] with the sister's daughter and the retention of children by the wife's family in cases of divorce.

614 616 The Mundurucú were divided by an exogamic moiety system, and these patrilineal moieties were subdivided into component patrilineal clans. Certain clans were allied into loose, unnamed phratries, and four clans had subclans. Although the clans were formally exogamic, their function in marriage regulation was superceded by the moiety. However, sexual relations within the clan [835] and, to a lesser extent, within the phratry were considered to be much more flagrant violations than was a breach of moiety exogamy. The moieties, referred to as "Red" and "White" people by the Mundurucú, had secondary functions such as the burial of each other's dead and the assignment of complementary roles in certain ceremonial situations. The levirate and sororate occasion- [587] ally occurred, but there is no indication that these were obligatory practices. [582] Marriage with true cross-cousins was very frequent and was looked upon as a desirable union. The community was neither endogamous nor exogamous, and marriage within or outside of the village was permissible.

The interrelation of phratry, clan, and subclan was complex and is of considerable importance in that it manifests a fission process whereby new clans are born and phratries formed. Contemporary Mundurucú informants reported thirty-eight clans, some of which are now extinct due to depopulation. Twenty-two of these clans were in the White moiety and sixteen were Red. Each clan bore the eponymous name of some plant, bird, or animal, but totemic taboos towards the species after which the clan was named were absent. There was no feeling or expression of relationship with the species on the part of the clan members, nor were there myths of descent from the eponymous objects. Each clan, however, had a spirit called the *tubö*, or "old person," which was given the same name as the clan.[2] This carried some connotations of ancestry, as *tubö* also denoted the various culture heroes and can well be translated as "great ancestor."

614 The origin of the clan system is variously explained by Mundurucú in- [715] formants. The most common response is that the culture hero, Karusakaibö, divided the Mundurucú into clans and gave them their names and spirits. However, Kruse (1934) reported a myth wherein the Mundurucú were once a number of mutually hostile tribes which were united by the same culture hero by the expedient of converting the tribes into clans. In connection with this latter myth and the previously mentioned lack of legends of descent from the eponymous object, it is significant that the Mundurucú word for the clan, *diwat*, does not directly imply descent. Literally translated, *diwat* means "dwellers of the river." Thus, the Aru (parrot) clan is referred to as Arudiwat, which means "dwellers of the river of the parrot." Ancestry is, however, in-

12: Murphy E-5 (1952-1953) 1960
SQ13 Mundurucu SQ13

578 837 spouse who lived in Cabitutú was his first wife, and she would not tolerate the second, a young girl of rather roving inclinations. Biboi's duties kept him in Cabitutú much of the time, but he was unable to bring his young wife there because of the disposition of the older one. This produced a dilemma, for the men of Cabruá, with but few exceptions, took great glee in fornicating with the girl during her husband's absences. Rumors of these happenings generally brought Biboi to the side of his errant mate, but his responsibilities soon drew him away again. And the men of Cabruá would again follow her into the underbrush. Their attraction to the young woman was, of course, primarily sexual, but most expressed their dual gratification in being able covertly to offend Biboi. The situation was reminiscent of a Mundurucú myth in which a man took revenge upon his hated brother by seducing his wife.[17]

595 Biboi's plural union is not a typical situation among the modern Mundurucú. Matrilocal residence makes polygyny most difficult, except of the sororal type, and no cases of the latter union were known by informants. It is, however, possible for chiefs and their sons, who can usually expect exemption from the matrilocal rule; chiefs were said by informants frequently to have had plural unions in former times. None, however, were known to have had more than two wives.

582 616 The only obligatory union among the Mundurucú is with a person of the opposite moiety. Moiety exogamy is rigidly adhered to in the savannah villages, and no cases of intramoiety marriage existed at the time of our visit. Informants denied the existence of casual liaisons between persons of the same moiety, and I do not know of 835 any. Incest is looked upon as a serious offense against

[17] Murphy, 1958.

12: Murphy E-5 (1952-1953) 1960
SQ13 Mundurucu SQ13

good taste and decency, although the seriousness of the delict depends on distance of relationship in the paternal line. Thus, incest within the nuclear family is considered absolutely unthinkable by the Mundurucú, but they frown in decreasing degree upon sexual relations within clan, phratry, and moiety. There is no defined punishment, however, for incest with any category of relative; the Mundurucú say only that people would be "ashamed" to commit such a breach.

In a society in which all people are believed to be related, moiety exogamy implies that any union with a person of the same generation and of the opposite group will be with a cross-cousin, either real or classificatory. Marriage with first degree cross-cousins is said by the Mundurucú to have been a highly preferred union at some time in the past, and it is still regarded as a most suitable match. I found only three cross-cousin marriages during the course of my field work, however, and it no longer occurs frequently. The levirate and sororate are, of course, permissible within the moiety system and occasionally occur, but persons are not and, within the memory of informants, were not formerly under any compulsion to enter such a marriage. Martius's report of the levirate [18] suggests that it may have been more prevalent during the period when partrilocality was still the residence rule. The levirate is a simple recognition of the right of the man's kin group, as a whole, to the woman. It may be hypothesized that the fractionation of the sibling group after the change to matrilocality dispersed the unit that formerly exercised corporate rights over the girl and made the levirate unworkable. And, since leviritic marriages are frequently polygynous, matrilocality imposed the same inhibitions as discussed above.

[18] Martius, 1867, p. 393.

12:Murphy E-5 (1952-1953) 1960
SQ13 Mundurucu SQ13

KINSHIP AND MARRIAGE

582 604 Mundurucú kinship terminology indicates the custom of marriage between a man and his sister's daughter.[19] This avuncular form of union was frequently reported by early chroniclers in South America,[20] and is said by Oberg to exist among the contemporary Kamayurá of the upper Xingú River.[21] Martius specifically reported it to be practiced by the Mundurucú when the sister's daughter had no other prospective husband.[22] Avuncular marriage is nowhere in evidence among the contemporary Mundurucú, however, and its practice, past or present, is vigorously denied. Informants regarded such a union as incestuous, despite the obvious fact that a sister's daughter is always of the opposite moiety from that of her uncle.

[835]

174 582 604 171 Since there is no reason to doubt the mutually corroborating distributional, documentary, and kinship-terminological evidence for sister's daughter marriage, we must assume that it has not only disappeared but has lapsed under such circumstances as to be absolutely proscribed. James Watson has noted a similar disappearance and taboo of sister's daughter marriage among the Cayuá Indians of southern Mato Grosso.[23] Although his evidence for its former practice is rather tenuous, he assumes it to have existed and to have fallen into abeyance due to the breakdown of the patrilineal extended family organization, and the union's consequent loss of function as a means of cementing relations between such units. Also, he assumes that marriages with the sister's daughter were commonly second unions, and the contemporary absence of polygyny would militate against the practice. Such rea-

[19] *See* pp. 93–94.

[20] Kirchoff (1932) presents the most complete discussion of this practice and contends that it was a common means of avoiding bride service.

[21] Oberg, 1953, p. 44.

[22] Martius, 1867, p. 393.

[23] Watson, 1952, pp. 118–121.

12: Murphy E-5 (1952-1953) 1960
SQ13 Mundurucu SQ13

soning may well be extended to the Mundurucú custom of avuncular marriage, or to various types of preferential union in many societies undergoing such changes. On the subject of its taboo, however, Watson deduces that the sister's daughter marriage has fallen under a general Cayuá prohibition on marriages with close kin. This has obviously no relevance to the Mundurucú situation, for no such prohibition exists among them, as the occasional cross-cousin union indicates.

I would prefer to advance an alternate explanation for the taboo, based on the proposition that there is often an incest taboo beween co-residents, whatever their genealogical connection may be.[24] Given the shift in residence rules that has been noted, the mother's brother and his sister's daughter are co-residents, at least until the time of his marriage. Thus, a union with her would be endogamous to the household and would not only be disruptive of the good order of the residential unit, following Malinowski,[25] but would tend to isolate the household from the larger society, a point that Leslie White, among others, has stressed.[26] That sister's daughter marriage is congruent with a patrilocal residence rule would also, it might be added, lend confirmation to the thesis that the Mundurucú are patrilocal.

KINSHIP TERMINOLOGY

Kinship is still an all-pervasive means of ordering social relations among the savannah Mundurucú. Every person in the entire tribe is considered to be related to every other and is known to him and addressed by him by a kin term. Reference to the list below of kin terms used by males indicates how these relations are structured.

[24] *Cf.* Titiev, 1943, p. 516.
[25] Malinowski, 1930, p. 630.
[26] White, 1948, p. 25.

12: Murphy E-5 (1952-1953) 1960
SQ13 Mundurucu SQ13

THE MUNDURUCÚ OF THE CURURÚ

166 182 It does not require a particularly strong motive to induce an Indian to leave his village. The villages have lost almost all their bases of cohesion. The considerations of coöperative labor and social organization, which have made the savannah villages continue to function, have now lapsed. The only remaining centripetal factors are the equipment of the farinha shed, bonds of close kinship, and the desire for sociability. The latter two factors are now waning in importance on the Cururú.

182 602 The ties of consanguinity show every evidence of weakening. Sib identity is preserved in the naming system, and moiety exogamy is usually observed in the choice of marriage partners. This, however, is already deteriorating, for there are now some unions between persons of the same [835] moiety, and violations of incest rules in casual sexual relations are much more frequent than in the savannah communities.

Kin ties have suffered in other ways. The circle of kinsmen significant to the individual in his daily social life and in the subsistence economy is constantly shrinking. Thus, an Indian might be able to identify and name a wide range of kinsmen (like the average European), but the fact of relationship is no longer of primary importance in patterns of coöperation, distribution, and interpersonal behavior. The important kinsmen are those who share a residence and join in the labor necessary to provide for the household needs. This group has become progressively [594] smaller on the Cururú, and it can be safely said that the nuclear family is well on the way to becoming the basic socioeconomic unit. It is significant that, while the common form of address on the savannahs is still by kinship [551] term, Mundurucú proper names and, increasingly, Christian names are more generally used on the Cururú.

182 621 The Cururú villages never did achieve stable integra-